



# **Imports and Global Collaboration on Food Defense**

**Agriculture Outlook Forum  
Washington, DC  
February 21, 2008**

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# PRESENTATION

- Who we are
- What is food defense?
- Why are we concerned about the food supply?
- U.S. Activities
- Import Vulnerability Assessments
- International Activities
  - G-8 Bioterrorism Experts Group (BTEX)
  - APEC Food Defense Initiative
  - MEPI Food Defense Initiative



# Food Safety & Inspection Service

## USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)

- Responsible for ensuring safety of meat, poultry, and egg products

## Office of Food Defense & Emergency Response

- Established in August 2002
- Mission: To prevent, prepare for and coordinate a response to an intentional attack on the food supply & large scale emergencies





# Food Defense vs. Food Safety

- **Food Safety** – the protection of food products from *unintentional contamination* by agents reasonably likely to occur in the food supply (e.g., *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria*)
- **Food Defense** – the protection of food products from *intentional contamination* by biological, chemical, physical, or radiological agents that are not reasonably likely to occur in the food supply (e.g., ricin, arsenic)



## **Why Are We Concerned about the Food Supply?**

- **Food supply is soft target**
- **Intelligence: terrorists have discussed food**
  - **Documents found in Afghanistan caves used by al Qaeda specify how to contaminate food**
  - **Manuals for intentional contamination of food are widely available on internet**
- **No specific threats indicating that an attack is imminent**



## **Why Are We Concerned about the Food Supply?**

- **Deliberate contamination could cause:**
  - Significant public health consequences; Threat agents can cause severe illnesses and death
  - Devastating economic impacts;
  - Widespread public fear;
  - Loss of public confidence in the safety of food and effectiveness of government





## Why Are We Concerned about the Food Supply?

- Attacks could be directed at multiple nodes in the farm to table continuum
  - Crops, livestock
  - Processing, distribution, storage, transportation
  - Retail (restaurants or supermarkets)





# US Activities in Food Defense

- **Conduct vulnerability assessments**
  - Determine most vulnerable products, likely agents, potential sites of contamination
  - Included **legally & illegally imported products**
- **Develop countermeasures**
- **Conduct surveillance and data analysis and integration**
- **Conduct research**
- **Manage food defense emergencies**
- **Provide outreach and training**
  - Domestic & **International**





# **FSIS Vulnerability Assessment of Legally Imported Food**

- **3.8 billion pounds meat, poultry, eggs imported to U.S.**
- **Imported products offer more access points for attack than domestic (e.g., land/sea transport, port of entry, Inspection House)**
- **Assessment considered:**
  - **Potential vulnerabilities of product during processing in country of origin and during transport to U.S.**
  - **Which products more vulnerable than others (considered import volume)**
  - **Sociopolitical stability of exporting country**



## **FSIS Vulnerability Assessment of Illegally Imported Food**

- **Smuggled product both food safety & food defense concern**
- **Primary motive for smuggling economic**
- **However, terrorists may choose this pathway:**
  - **Easier to contaminate**
  - **Avoids CBP inspections; USDA checks**
- **Assessment considered:**
  - **Feasibility of illegally importing products**
  - **Identified pathways with highest vulnerability**
  - **Estimated amount of illegal imports entering U.S.**
- **Given large quantity, illegally imported meat & poultry represent potential avenue for attack**



## **G-8 Activities**

- **G-8 Bioterrorism Experts Group (BTEX)**
  - Established under U.S. Presidency in 2004
  - Goal: strengthen actions to prevent bioterrorism; establish expert-to-expert contacts
- **2005 Workshop for G-8 BTEX**
  - Food defense awareness
  - Methodology used for vulnerability assessments
  - Developing countermeasures
- **Representatives from all G-8 countries & EU participated**



## **G-8 Activities, cont.**

- **Follow-up Meeting, London 2006**
  - Shared U.S. efforts: Strategic Partnership Program Agroterrorism (SPPA) Initiative; Food and Agriculture Sector Government Coordinating Council (GCC)
- **Table-top Food Defense Exercise planned for May 2008 (Minneapolis, MN)**





# **APEC Food Defense Initiative**

- **Food defense - lead counterterrorism initiative for U.S. in APEC**
- **1<sup>st</sup> activity: Workshop, Bangkok, Nov 2006**
  - **USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), FSIS, Dept. of State, FDA**
  - **Policymakers, technical experts, public- and private-sector stakeholders from 17 APEC economies**





# APEC Food Defense Initiative

- **Workshop goal:** Provide technical assistance, training on defending against foodborne terrorism
- **Information provided:**
  - Vulnerability assessment tools
  - Strategies to mitigate risk of intentional acts of terrorism to food supply
- **Follow on Workshop: Vietnam, June 2007**
  - Capacity building
  - Develop best practices in food defense
  - Mechanisms for sharing information in emergencies





## **APEC Food Defense Initiative**

- **Food Defense Principles: “Mitigating the Terrorist Threat to APEC Food Supply”**
  - **Co-sponsored by U.S., Australia, Chile**
  - **Provide scientific basis for protecting food supply from terrorism**
  - **APEC Counterterrorism Task Force (CTTF) recommended endorsement**
- **Sept. 2007, 15<sup>th</sup> APEC Leaders’ Meeting (Sydney)**
  - **All 21 APEC economies APEC Leaders signed onto principles**
  - **First international forum to issue guidance on food defense**
  - **Highlights importance of international cooperation**
  - **Outcome: 9 Food Defense Principles**



# Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)

- **Symposium: “Protecting the Middle East's Food Supply from Intentional Contamination”**
  - January 2008, Egypt
  - USDA FAS, FSIS, FDA, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of State
- **First-ever food defense activity in Middle East**
  - Goal: encourage broader regional dialogue and engagement among MEPI countries on protecting food
  - Representatives recommended follow-up steps be taken to expand awareness to key stakeholders







## **Other International Activities**

- **FSIS Import Surveillance Liaison Officers (ISLOs)**
- **International Trade Data System (ITDS)**
- **CBP-National Targeting Center**
- **Bilateral arrangements with Canada & Mexico**



# Summary

- **An attack on the food supply would have high impact**
  - **Possible to cause mass fatalities**
- **Food defense focus on both imports and exports**
- **International coordination & cooperation essential to protect global food supply**



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